



MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

Mr Karmenu Vella
Member of the European Commission

The Hague, 21 MRT 2016
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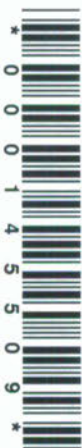
Dear Mr Vella,

At the request of the Dutch House of Representatives, I am writing to inform you about the Netherlands' position in the Birds and Habitats Directives' (BHD) Fitness Check.

At the Environment Council meeting of 16 December 2015, various conclusions were adopted concerning the mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy. These were supported by the Netherlands. Some of these conclusions relate to the implementation of the BHD (Target 1 of the Strategy), which were also strongly endorsed by the Netherlands. The following elements in the conclusions on Target 1 are important for the Netherlands:

- the BHD is essential for European nature protection;
- maintaining the goals and not lowering the nature protection standards;
- legal certainty must be maintained for all concerned;
- the Council is looking forward to receiving measures resulting from the Fitness Check to strengthen implementation.

From these conclusions we can draw that, when formulating further ideas in the context of the Fitness Check, the focus should not be on amending the Directives. Rather, the focus should be on improving the implementation of the BHD, without questioning the protection targets at hand.





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The Netherlands will contribute to this formulation of ideas by staging a conference on Future-proof Nature Policy, under the Dutch EU presidency. The main goal of the conference is to improve the implementation of the BHD, including a special focus on related social issues such as water management and economic development and entrepreneurship, while maintaining the current level of nature protection.

5.1.2.e

Martijn van Dam

Cc: An identical letter has been sent to Commissioner Timmermans, on request of my Parliament